



**SPAULDING**<sup>TM</sup>  
REHABILITATION NETWORK



**MRC**

**Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission**

## Spaulding Rehabilitation Network and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission

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### Partnership and Accomplishments

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January 5, 2015

“The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) promotes the equality, empowerment and independence of individuals with disabilities. These goals are achieved through enhancing and encouraging personal choice and the right to succeed or fail in the pursuit of independence and employment in the community.” - **Charles Carr, MRC Commissioner**

## Table of Contents

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>The Spaulding Rehabilitation Network-MRC Job Placement Services Partnership: the Working Partners Program .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>MRC-Spaulding Evidence Based Job Placement Best Practices Manual ....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>The Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Reuse Program - REquipment ....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Appendices .....</b>	<b>9</b>
	▪ A: The MRC-Spaulding Hospital Job Placement Services Marketing Manual.....	9
	▪ B: The REquipment Program Fact Sheet.....	11

## Introduction

The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC) is committed under the leadership of Commissioner Charles Carr to further the development of community partnerships to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to live and work independently throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts based on their choices, needs, and abilities. Partnerships are essential and a priority to assist MRC in efforts to achieve the MRC's mission which is to: "Promote the equality, empowerment and independence of individuals with disabilities. These goals are achieved through enhancing and encouraging personal choice and the right to succeed or fail in the pursuit of independence and employment in the community".

MRC has developed a partnership with the Spaulding Rehabilitation Network to mutually assist individuals with disabilities in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The partnership began with the "Working Partners" community partnership. Spaulding subsequently awarded the MRC grant funds totaling \$25,000 to develop the Evidence Based Job Placement Best Practices Manual and the Durable Medical Equipment Reuse REquipment program. These initiatives assist MRC in fulfilling its mission. Spaulding Rehabilitation Network is clearly "A Champion for Change" through the award of these community partnership grants to MRC to foster change by promoting independence of individuals with disabilities. This report describes the features, benefits and results of the MRC-Spaulding partnership.

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The success of the Spaulding-MRC working partnership was demonstrated through an October 2014 White House award ceremony acknowledging Spaulding Rehabilitation Network partnership with MRC.



***Left to Right: Oswald "Oz" Mondejar, Senior Vice President of Mission and Advocacy for Partners Continuing Care; Joan Phillips, Assistant Commissioner of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, MRC; and William Allen, Director of Employment Placement Services, MRC, at the October 2014 White House award ceremony.***

## **The Spaulding Rehabilitation Network-MRC Job Placement Services Partnership: the Working Partners Program**

The “Working Partners” Program is an innovative public-private partnership that provides qualified persons with disabilities the skills and support they need to join the workforce in a renowned medical setting, and improve their overall quality of life. This employment and training program has been an effective and creative venture between the largest employer in Massachusetts, Partners Health Care, and the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. MRC and the Spaulding Rehabilitation Network share a mutual commitment to assisting individuals with disabilities achieve improved quality of life through independent living and employment.

MRC began developing a relationship with Spaulding in 2008 through the Job Observation Project pilot, during which MRC Job Placement Specialists (JPS) observed various jobs at Spaulding to develop a comprehensive understanding of both technical and “soft” skills for each department and job category. The goal was to use the information from these observations to assist MRC Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors to prepare job candidates with disabilities served by MRC for work opportunities within Spaulding Rehabilitation Network.

Growing off of this partnership, “Working Partners” was developed by Spaulding’s Vice President of Mission and Advocacy, Oswald “Oz” Mondejar, with the backing of David Storto, President of Partners Continuing Care, Spaulding Rehabilitation Network and Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, MRC Commissioner Charles Carr, and Assistant Commissioner Joan Phillips, Vocational Rehabilitation Division. Breaking ground in 2011, the project’s implementation has been managed by Colleen Moran, Project Director for Spaulding and MRC Job Placement Services Director Bill Allen and his staff.

This program has resulted in a partnership that has grown since inception and expanded to include Massachusetts General Hospital, with growing interest in other hospitals and medical facilities. As the “Working Partners” Program has evolved, Oz Mondejar has worked towards advancing and institutionalizing this partnership and sharing it with other employers in the workforce and development community, clearly changing the way we do business in Massachusetts.

### **Services and Goals of the Working Partners Initiative:**

“Working Partners” has opened the doors for qualified, skilled MRC candidates, referred by MRC Counselors and Job Placement Specialists from MRC Area Offices, by providing direct access to open positions and opportunities at Partners’ hospitals and medical facilities. MRC has assigned an Employment Services Specialist to work directly with Spaulding’s Human Resources, Hiring Managers and other Medical Professionals to increase hiring, training, and education for candidates. Spaulding and MRC work together to educate about institutional processes, and ensure a successful collaboration through: real-world experience of hospital positions; on-site meetings with VR staff to speak about Spaulding and MRC referral processes; and consulting to assist with employment strategies and career pathways for individuals with disabilities.

The goal is improve workforce development, job retention for an evolving workforce, and increased competitive employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Additionally, the goal is to create career ladders and advancement opportunities in the healthcare industry for individuals with disabilities. In addition, the partnership provides an avenue for Spaulding patients to be referred for MRC services to assist them in their efforts to improve their quality of life through assistance with independent living and obtaining employment.

**Results for “Working Partners” to date have been impressive and includes the following:**

- Spaulding offers opportunities for a full-time, assigned MRC Employment Specialist to liaise with Human Resources staff, meet weekly with Department Hiring Managers, and to conduct on-site trainings. Additionally, “Meet and Greets,” pre-screening interviews for hospital positions, along with informational sessions, and tours have been a regular occurrence. Spaulding and MRC’s relationship development and strong communication amongst both sets of staff has boosted outcomes and increased employment activity beyond expectations.
- **Since the development of “Working Partners”, The Spaulding Rehabilitation Network has hired 44 MRC consumers to date in a wide variety of occupational categories** including: Environmental Services, Nursing, Food Services, Marketing, Pharmacy, Security, Medical Records, Administrative, Patient Services and Adaptive Sports. Having personnel on-site allows for another candidate resource and has positively impacted the retention rate.
- Through “Working Partners”, MRC has gained a strong referral source, providing guidance to the newly injured and healing, and increasing the MRC consumer base; therefore, immediately identifying individuals with newly acquired, progressive and other medical needs to return to gainful employment.
- With its Model Systems Hospital designation, the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, tracks referrals to the MRC, as well as positive employment outcomes.
- Mutual development trainings and opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including the following: job shadowing and informational interviews; volunteer opportunities leading to direct hospital hire; paid On-the-Job Evaluation and On-the-Job Training opportunities leading to employment in Development, Marketing, Finance, Adaptive Sports and Clinical Education; Clinical Preceptorships when no other regional hospital was able to train an MRC candidate; and opportunities for MRC artists to display their work on-site at Spaulding hospitals as a means to employment and entrepreneurship.
- The success of the “Working Partners” program is demonstrated by the naming of Oswald Mondejar as a 2014 Disability Employment Champion of Change by President Obama for his work on this partnership. The Champion of Change program celebrates individuals who are recognized for outstanding achievement in assisting disabled Americans in the workplace. Champions are selected through an open nomination process. Oz was honored at a ceremony at the White House in October 2014.

## **The MRC-Spaulling Evidence Based Job Placement Best Practices Manual**

Over the past several years, the MRC has focused on building its Job Placement Services team as one of many tools to assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment. MRC's Job Placement Services team consists of Job Placement Specialists (JPS) and Employment Service Specialists (ESS). MRC's Job Placement Specialists (JPS) work with MRC counselors and employers to place consumers into employment opportunities across the Commonwealth. MRC's Employment Service Specialists (ESS) work in tandem with JPS staff to seek out and develop relationships with employers, and work directly with employers to develop programs and identify employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The primary customer of the ESS staff is the employer. MRC has also developed an employer-account management system in multiple labor market sectors to develop partnerships with employers to routinely hire and retain MRC consumers for available positions. MRC's Job Placement strategies have emphasized On the Job Training, employer collaboration, and individually designed partnerships, most notably MRC's partnership with Spaulling.

MRC's Job Placement strategies, account management system, and employer partnerships have been very successful in assisting individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment. In FY2014, MRC JPS staff assisted 579 consumers in obtaining successful employment outcomes, while ESS staff assisted 296 consumers in obtaining successful employment. Employment outcomes increased 17.2% from FY2013 for JPS staff, and increased by 18.9% for ESS staff.

MRC and Spaulling decided to create a manual of best practices in job placement of individuals with disabilities in order to continue to build upon these efforts and assist in institutionalizing these practices within the MRC, Spaulling, and other community partners to ensure continued success.

Spaulling awarded a \$20,000 grant to MRC towards the development of the Evidence Based Job Placement Best Practices manual. This manual is the culmination of ideas, best practices, and strategies from the many stakeholders that assist individuals with disabilities to seek, obtain and retain competitive employment. It is designed to provide ongoing direction to counselors, placement staff and community providers. It is a comprehensive, user friendly document that MRC and its partners will utilize for education and training purposes. The manual will be an evolving and dynamic process over time as new practices are developed and existing processes are refined. It is a living document that will be current with the changing competitive labor market.

The process of developing the manual drew upon the expertise of MRC counselors, supervisors, area and regional directors; community based vendors and private-public employers, persons with disabilities, and the employer community. The manual covers a series of topics regarding best practices for integrated job placement services including job readiness activities, candidate preparation, employer engagement, employer disability sensitivity training, on-the-job training, and related topics.

**A full list of topics covered in the manual can be found in Appendix A.**

A Job Placement Services Manual Committee was formed to review new material that is proven to be effective and to manage edits and additions to the manual as it evolves. This committee is co-chaired by the MRC Director of Job Placement Services and the MRC Director of Training. A series of trainings for MRC staff are being planned on core practices described in the manual in order to ensure consistent and uniform utilization of these processes across MRC area offices.

### **The Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Reuse Program - REquipment**

The REquipment program collects donated durable medical equipment (DME), cleans and refurbishes the DME and reassigns it to adults and children with disabilities and seniors in Greater Boston and Central MA. The REquipment program grew out of the Greater Boston Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Reuse pilot program, which began in May 2013. The Greater Boston DME Reuse program utilized direct funding and in-kind support from private and public sources. Year one direct funding totaled \$70,000 and came from Spaulding Rehabilitation Network, the Shapiro Family Foundation, and the MassMATCH Program of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC).

In-kind support was provided by the following: Marva Serotkin and Don Fredette of the Boston Home; Karen Langley, Director of Assistive Technology and Community Support Programs the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS); Ann Shor, Director of Independent Living Services at the MRC; Tom Perry of the Boston Center for Independent Living (BCIL); and Gary Rabideau of the Massachusetts Hospital School. This support was invaluable to the program and to the individuals it serves.

<b>Year 1 REquipment Direct Funding</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital	\$ 5,000.00
Mass Rehabilitation Commission	\$ 40,000.00
Shapiro Family Foundation Grant	\$ 25,000.00
<b>TOTAL Pilot Funding</b>	<b>\$ 70,000.00</b>

Getting patients back into the community is the highest priority of the REquipment program. The DME Reuse pilot program began in December 2013 with the launch of a web-based inventory system that allows consumers to view and request equipment through the [www.dmerequipment.org](http://www.dmerequipment.org) website. Launch announcements were published in several newsletters, websites and listservs. REquipment also launched a Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/dmerequipment](http://www.facebook.com/dmerequipment), and outreach began with exhibiting with MRC's MassMATCH program at several disability-related conferences during early 2014.

The number of equipment donations and reassigned DME grew steadily over the pilot year. By August of 2014, the program had two part time Project Coordinators based out of the MRC administrative offices in Boston. The Department of Developmental Disabilities (DDS) joined as a partner in June 2014. The DDS made a critical contribution by providing space for a new AT Regional Center in Worcester, providing additional operational capacity for the REquipment program.



The REquipment program achieved the following results from 10/2013 through 9/2014:

REquipment Program Results: October 2013 – September 2014	
# of Online Consumer Requests	84
# of Donations Refurbished & Posted	83
# of DME Reassigned to Consumers	44
Value of Reassigned DME	\$ 73,850.00

In addition, the REquipment program also provides many social benefits, including:

- DME Reuse assists patients with returning home and back to the community safely and quickly
- DME Reuse is often easier and faster than dealing with typical health insurance bureaucracy
- DME Reuse provides vital back up equipment for safety at home and work
- DME Reuse can be used short term until new equipment is received or repaired
- DME Reuse gives expensive and functional equipment a second life, out of state landfills

These social benefits permeate the social and economic fabric of the Commonwealth in many positive ways. Cognizant of the potential benefits, Spaulding Hospital staff were early adopters of the REquipment program. Working with Spaulding Hospital discharge managers and physical therapists, the REquipment program has provided users with safer and quicker discharges back to their homes, as illustrated by the following success stories from Spaulding patients:

- A patient was ready for discharge from Spaulding Hospital to his home in Plainville. His insurance approved him for a mechanical lift to assist with getting in and out of bed, but would not approve an electric lift. The situation was extremely stressful for the man's wife, who has a slight build. She knew she would not be able to operate the mechanical lift safely for her husband. REquipment provided the couple with a refurbished, full-electric sling lift, making a big difference in their quality of life.
- *"I just had a patient's spouse who came into my office with tears in her eyes because she was able to get a power Hoyer lift from REquipment. I know that you know that your work makes a huge difference in the lives of persons with disabilities... We at Spaulding are fortunate to be able to see first-hand how your work "plays out" in the lives of our patients."*

-Rosanne Woodmansee, Community Resource Specialist at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital

During the pilot year, REquipment received accolades from both consumers and donors. Continuing to earn positive feedback by developing and expanding funding sources that allow the program to continue is critical to the mission of REquipment. The program will continue to pursue increased funding through collaborative efforts with partners and stakeholders, with the aim of long term sustainability and growth.

The REquipment program looks forward to maintaining its successful partnership with Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital, whose expertise, commitment, and support allow the program to better serve individuals in need of DME services in Massachusetts.





**Commissioner Carr and the REquipment Advisory Committee and Program Staff.**

## Summary

MRC has committed to developing and enhancing collaborative partnerships to assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining competitive employment and living independently in the community. The partnership with Spaulding Rehabilitation Network is an excellent example of how these collaborations can effectively assist individuals with disabilities through improved quality of life through independent living and employment.

Spaulding has played a crucial and important role in developing this innovative partnership through its commitment to assisting individuals with disabilities, through dedication of specific resources, and through the vision of Oz Mondejar. The features and benefits of this collaboration in its three components: the “Working Partners” community partnership, the collaborative Evidence Based Job Placement Best Practices Manual, and the Greater Boston Durable Medical Equipment Reuse REquipment program. These initiatives represent best practices in terms of community partnerships that benefit individuals with disabilities.

The MRC is committed to continuing to extend and develop this relationship with Spaulding Rehabilitation Network to mutually assist individuals with disabilities through independent living and employment. *The MRC-Spaulding Hospital Job Placement Services Marketing Manual is an extensive resource available through the MRC agency intranet. The following is the table of contents for the manual, providing the areas and topics that are covered.*

## Appendix A: Evidence Based Job Placement Best Practices Manual

### Table of Contents

***Funding for this manual was provided by Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Network. We gratefully acknowledge our strong partnership with Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital which made this evidenced best practices manual for job placement services possible for the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and our Consumers.***

***The scope and design of this manual includes evidenced-based best practices for competitive job placement activities. It is a comprehensive guide that will allow users to fully engage our consumers in the job placement process. The manual represents methodologies that have proven to be highly effective for integrated job placement services for the people we serve. Contributions to the manual came from counselors, job placement specialists, employment services specialists, supervisors, and area directors.***

#### **Referral and Job Readiness**

- Definition of Job Readiness
- Job Placement Candidate Preparation
- ESS and JSS Role Delineation
- No Office Left Behind
- Process Flow of Job Readiness
- Job Placement Referral Form
- Job Readiness Activities

#### **Consumer Candidate Preparation**

- Soft Skills Curriculum
- Soft Skills for Success in the Workplace
- Job Seeking Skills Manual
- Successful Job Placement Strategies for Individuals with Mental Health Issues
- MRC Job Readiness Activities
- MRC Manpower TDC Manual
- Behavioral Interviewing
- Behavioral Based Interview Question
- Successfully Answer Behavioral Questions in Your Job Interview
- Typical Behavioral Interview Questions by Category
- Staying Cool in the Hot Seat
- Sample Cover Letter

#### **Employer Development Engagement**

- Employer Engagement
- The Secrets to Finding Successful Job Placements in the Hidden Job Market
- Building Sustainable Relationships with Business
- Employer Account Management Checklist
- Account Management Checklist Boxes
- MRC Account Management Employers Staff Assignments 11-14 BP Manual
- MRC Employer Account System
- MRC Employer Account Briefing
- Employer Briefing

- Interviewing a Job Applicant Who is a Person with a Disability
- Spaulding Job Observation Pilot Program



Disability Mentoring Month

### **Employer Disability Sensitivity Training**

- Disability Awareness and Sensitivity Training
- Understanding and Working with Disabilities in the Workplace
- Making the Best Employment Decisions
- Disability Awareness and Sensitivity Training Cover Sheet
- Disability Awareness and Sensitivity Training Partnership Between Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission and Human Resources
- Case Study - Recruiter
- Small Group Scenarios
- Interview Scenarios and Disclosure
- Understanding and Working with Disabilities Part 1
- Understanding and Working with Disabilities Part 2

### **On the Job Training and On the Job Evaluation**

- MRC Instructional Memorandum 6-07
- MRC OJE and OJT
- OJT and OJE Protocols
- OJT Agreement
- OJE Agreement

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## **Appendix B: The REquipment Program Fact Sheet**

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The fact sheet can be viewed at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/mrc/fs-at-requipment-2014.pdf>